

# “PURE RELIGION”

JAMES 1:26, 27

## Context:

The overall point of the book is to teach us what genuine Christianity looks like.

This was most likely the first book of the Bible written after Jesus died.

V.1 – James wrote this letter to people that are suffering hard times in their lives.

V 2-12 – We can (and should) have joy throughout trials because God uses them for our good.

V.13-18 – We shouldn’t blame God for our temptations or when we give in to sin.

V.19-25 – We should listen up to what God’s Word has for us, and we should live it out in our everyday lives.

Theme: Our Religion is vain and worthless without the practical application of God’s Word.  
Another way of saying it would be this... Our religion must not be a fake, outward show.

Two explanations from verses 26, 27 that help us understand what pure religion really is:

## **I. An outward appearance of religion is not true religion. (v26)**

“*If any man among you...*” - This can be taken as referring to either people that are not saved but are in the assembly, or that are saved but are not acting like it... it can be a description of both types of people.

“*seemeth to be religious,*” – This is referring to the person who does all of the right actions. They are involved in every aspect of the outward worship of God.

“*and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart,*” - This person thinks that they have it all together because they look religious and even try to act religious, but that person is only deceiving themselves. They have it all wrong.

The lesson that we can learn from this is that religion is not “outward-in” but it is “inward-out”  
It is our inner man, not our outward appearance that produces pure, spiritual religion.

“*This man’s religion is vain.*” - The person who focuses on outward instead of inner faith and relationship is doing a useless and unprofitable work. He has it all wrong and backwards.

The main point is this... True faith is demonstrated by our actions in our everyday lives, not just by how religious we look or how religious we come across as being.

We learn two main lessons from this point...

**1. A pure religion comes from our inner man working out.** (“*but deceiveth his own heart*”)

**2. A pure religion comes from our inner man having a strong relationship with God’s Word/ways.** (Verses 19-25)

## **II. True religion is when our strong inner man explodes into our outward actions. (v.27)**

When we have a strong inner man that is yielded to the Holy Spirit, that is dependant on God, and that has a deep faith in Christ, our outer man will have no choice but to show what is on the inside. Our outward actions are a mirror of our inward heart, but our inward heart is where it starts.

When our strong inner man explodes into our outward actions these verses say that we will do three things...

### **A. Have a controlled tongue (v.26)**

### **B. Care for the Fatherless and widows (v.27)**

When we give to others with no hope of receiving in return, we show what it means to be a true follower of Jesus Christ.

### **C. Flee the delights of this world (v.27)**

#### **1. What separation is... purity**

Like a spotless lamb.

#### **2. What separation is not... isolation**

Like a hermit.

## **So What?**

So what? What are we going to do about this? How does this apply to us?

We have learned tonight that our religion is worthless without the practical application of God's Word.

How about you? ...Is your religion merely outward and vain or is it pure and unspotted?